

Extended Foster Care vs. Foster Care to 21 Program Comparison

For many years Washington State has provided services to young adults transitioning out of foster care in order for them to complete high school, attain their GED, enroll in and complete college or a vocational program. In 2011 and 2012, Washington legislature passed new laws that require these services to be provided through the dependency action.

The chart below is a comparison of the new **Extended Foster Care** program and the current **Foster Care to 21** program. The post-secondary extended foster care program began June 7, 2012. The Foster Care to 21 program will be phased out over the next three years as current participants graduate or reach the age of 21. No new participants are being admitted into the Foster Care to 21 program.

Program Elements	Extended Foster Care	Foster Care to 21
Eligibility Criteria	On the youth's 18 th birthday they must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent • In foster care; and • Enrolled in high school or GED program; or • Enrolled in, or applied and can demonstrate an intent to timely enroll in, a college or vocational program 	Youth must be 18 and meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently a dependent and in a licensed foster home at the time of transition from care. or • The youth has transitioned out of a licensed foster care home within six months of applying for the foster care to 21 program. • Graduated or about to graduate from high school or obtained or about to obtain a GED. • Accepted or enrolled in a college or vocational program for the next quarter or enrolled in a college or voc-tech program.
Admission to the Program	Eligible youth must elect to participate in the program by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing the <i>Extended Foster Care Agreement form (DSHS 10-432)</i>; • Informing their social worker; or • Informing their Assigned Attorney 	No longer admitting youth. (No youth accepted into this program after June 6, 2012.) This program will only be available to current program participants until June 2015 when it ends.
Trial Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible youth who exit foster care at age 18 have a six month period from their 18th birthday to elect to re-enter foster care. • CA will not provide placement or case planning services to youth during the trial independence period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Background Checks	No , background checks are not required for youth coming into care from a trial independence period.	Yes , Background checks were required for youth re-entering care within 6 months of exiting care.

Program Elements	Extended Foster Care	Foster Care to 21
Court involvement	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dependency remains open Parents are dismissed from the dependency action; Youth are assigned an Attorney; and Court hearings occur every 6 months 	No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth sign a Voluntary Placement/Service Agreement with the department. There is no court oversight.
Services:	Services are the same as dependent youth under the age of 18.	Transitional planning and agreed upon service supports are provided.
Placement:	Yes , in foster care (including group care), relative care or approved suitable person.	Yes , in licensed foster care (including group care).
Payment:	Foster care payment is calculated using Foster Care Rate Assessment tool.	Foster Care payment is the basic rate only.
Health and Safety visits	Youth in this program receive monthly visits with their social worker.	Youth in this program receive visits every 90 days.
Legal Status	Youth are considered a “child” only for the purposes of the dependency action; otherwise the youth has the legal rights and status of an adult.	Youth is an adult and has legal rights and status of an adult.
Program Ending	The program ends when youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate from their educational program (<i>completes high school or GED program, or college or vocational program</i>) Reach the age of 21 No longer agrees to participate in program Leaves their foster care placement Terminate enrollment in educational program 	The program ends when youth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fail to actively participate in academic or vocational program and maintain the standard of eligibility set by the school program. Fail to meet expectations outlined in Voluntary Services Agreement. No longer qualifies for and maintains financial aid resources such as FAFSA, trust fund, ETV and scholarships. Leave placement without notice to or consent of the social worker. Is asked to leave placement by the placement provider for violation of the rules or guidelines established by the placement. Engage in illegal behavior, as defined by the Washington State Criminal Code, or demonstrates a pattern of drug and/or alcohol abuse.

- If you have questions, please contact Jim Pritchard, Program Manager at Jim.Pritchard@dshs.wa.gov or call 360-902-8487.